

5 CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 10 1. A method for interfacing with a home automation system using a router comprising:
- receiving a control signal from an instant messenger application, the control signal received by the router via a communications network;
- transmitting the control signal to at least one appliance to control the appliance in accordance with the control signal; and
- 15 transmitting a reply to the instant messenger application regarding a status of the appliance.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- transmitting the control signal to the appliance in accordance with a
- 20 standardized home automation interface.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- interfacing with the appliance via a home automation system interface unit configured to control a plurality of appliances, the interfacing conducted in
- 25 accordance with a standardized home automation interface.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the home automation system interface unit is a transceiver configured to control the plurality of appliances.
- 30 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- logging onto an instant messenger server; and

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5 functioning as an instant messenger client to receive the control signal.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving an event signal from the appliance; and

transmitting a message to the instant messenger application regarding

10 the event signal from the appliance.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

maintaining a firewall in the router; and

transmitting a message to the instant messenger application through

15 the firewall wall.

8. A router for interfacing with a home automation system via a communications network, comprising:

a network interface for communicating with a communications network;

20 a home automation system interface for communicating with a home automation system; and

a computer system for executing computer readable code, the computer system having a processor coupled to a memory, the memory having computer readable code which when executed by the processor causes the

25 router to implement a method comprising:

receiving control signals from an instant messenger application, the control signal received by the router via the network interface;

transmitting the control signal to at least one appliance to control the appliance in accordance with the control signal, the control signal transmitted

30 to the appliance via the home automation system interface; and

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5 transmitting a reply to the instant messenger application regarding a
status of the appliance.

9. The router of claim 8 wherein the method further comprises:
transmitting the control signal to the appliance in accordance with a
10 standardized home automation interface.

10. The router of claim 8 wherein the method further comprises:
interfacing with the appliance via a home automation system interface
unit configured to control a plurality of appliances, the interfacing conducted in
15 accordance with a standardized home automation interface.

11. The router of claim 10 wherein the home automation system
interface unit is a transceiver configured to control the plurality of appliances.

12. The router of claim 8 wherein the method further comprises:
logging onto an instant messenger server; and
functioning as an instant messenger client to receive the control signal.

13. The router of claim 8 wherein the method further comprises:
25 receiving an event signal from the appliance; and
transmitting a message to the instant messenger application regarding
the event signal from the appliance.

14. The router of claim 8 wherein the method further comprises:
30 maintaining a firewall in the router; and

5 transmitting a message to the instant messenger application through
the firewall wall.

15. A router for interfacing with a home automation system comprising:
means for receiving a control signal from an instant messenger
10 application, the control signal received by the router via a communications
network;

means for transmitting the control signal to at least one appliance to
control the appliance in accordance with the control signal; and

means for transmitting a reply to the instant messenger application
15 regarding a status of the appliance.

16. The router of claim 15 wherein the control signal transmitting
means is configured to transmit the control signal to the appliance in
accordance with a standardized home automation interface.

17. The router of claim 15 further comprising:

means for interfacing with the appliance via a home automation system
interface unit configured to control a plurality of appliances, the interfacing
means compatible with a standardized home automation interface.

18. The router of claim 17 wherein the home automation system
interface unit is a transceiver configured to control the plurality of appliances.

19. The router of claim 15 of further comprising:

means for logging onto an instant messenger server; and

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5 means for functioning as an instant messenger client to receive the
control signal.

20. The router of claim 15 further comprising:

means for receiving an event signal from the appliance; and

10 means for transmitting a message to the instant messenger application
regarding the event signal from the appliance.

21. The router of claim 15 further comprising:

means for maintaining a firewall in the router; and

15 means for transmitting a message to the instant messenger application
through the firewall wall.

22. The router of claim 15 wherein the communications network is the
Internet.

20 23. A computer readable media having computer readable code which
when executed by a processor of a router causes the router to implement a
method for interfacing with a home automation system via a communications
network, comprising:

25 receiving a control signal from an instant messenger application, the
control signal received by the router via a communications network;

transmitting the control signal to at least one appliance to control the
appliance in accordance with the control signal; and

30 transmitting a reply to the instant messenger application regarding a
status of the appliance.

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5 24. The computer readable media of claim 23 further comprising:
transmitting the control signal to the appliance in accordance with a
standardized home automation interface.

10 25. The computer readable media of claim 23 further comprising:
interfacing with the appliance via a home automation system interface
unit configured to control a plurality of appliances, the interfacing conducted in
accordance with a standardized home automation interface.

15 26. The computer readable media of claim 3 wherein the home
automation system interface unit is a transceiver configured to control the
plurality of appliances.

20 27. The computer readable media of claim 23 further comprising:
logging onto an instant messenger server; and
functioning as an instant messenger client to receive the control signal.

25 28. The computer readable media of claim 23 further comprising:
receiving an event signal from the appliance; and
transmitting a message to the instant messenger application regarding
the event signal from the appliance.

30 29. The computer readable media of claim 23 further comprising:
maintaining a firewall in the router; and
transmitting a message to the instant messenger application through
the firewall wall.